



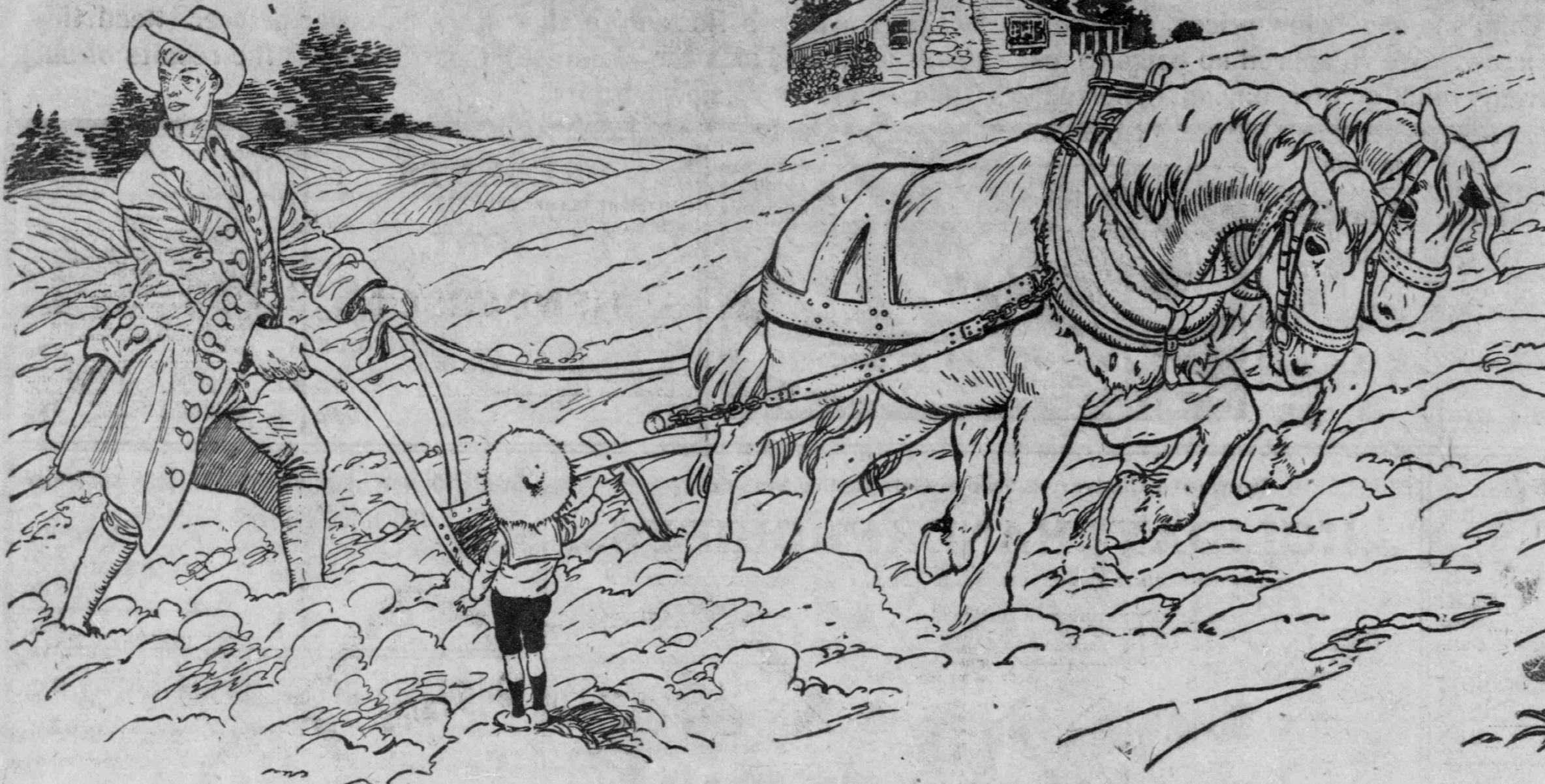
McDougall's Good Stories For Children



Little Perry Grant Overcomes a Witch and Wins a Giant's Friendship

How He Searched in the Mountains Until He Discovered Them

The Wonderful Good He Accomplished and the Great Wealth He Accumulated by the Use of a Magic Wind Bag



THE GIANT LOOKED 'ALL 'ROUND BEFORE DISCOVERING THE SMALL BOY

"GRACIOUS, mother, how did we ever come to live in such a lonely, desolate place as this!" exclaimed little Perry Grant, as he looked out of the window of his mother's cottage at the dark and sombre trees that overshadowed the house, and up at the tall mountains that seemed to reach to the white, fleecy clouds. This was all of the view from the narrow window, for the cottage was set at the very bottom of a deep valley beside a roaring, flashing trout brook, and early in the afternoon the sun vanished beyond the blue mountains, making evening come far earlier than it ought to, so it seemed to the boy.

"Well, your father picked out this place for our house many years before you were born," replied Mrs. Grant, "and I have never been able to afford a better residence, altho' I certainly wish we lived nearer a school, for your sake."

"I guess no school teacher could teach me more than you have, anyhow," said Perry, proudly. "I was talking to a scholar from the school over the mountains, and he told me that the teacher never even heard of such things as you have taught me!"

"That may well be," responded Mrs. Grant, laughing. "But I do wish that it were easier to get around in this country," added Perry. "It's awful to have to climb these cliffs when you want to visit another boy!"

"It makes you strong and healthy," said his mother. "Anyway, I never heard of a place where it rains so often and so long," asserted the boy. "Why, it's rained now for three weeks steadily and the ground is like a sponge. Seems to me the world will never get dry again!"

"It will not hurt you to get wet once in a while if you take off your things when you come in and put on dry clothes," said his mother, with a smile. "You are neither sugar nor salt."

"No, nor a duck, either," laughed Perry. "I'll have fins if I paddle around in the wet much more. I feel just like a mermaid—I mean a merman! I wonder what makes it rain so much here?"

"Well, they do say that it's the Rain Witch who is causing it," responded Mrs. Grant, glancing up the mountain side. "But you know I have never believed in witches."

"But how do they say she does it?" eagerly inquired the lad, drawing closer.

"Bless my soul! I never asked anybody about it nor listened to those foolish tales," replied Mrs. Grant.

"I'll bet old Martha up on Hemlock Hill knows all about it," asserted Perry. "I believe I'll just take a walk up and ask her."

"She will tell you an awful lot of rubbish," said his mother; "but you might as well go and take her some food, for I suspect she has little chance to get about in such weather."

So, a few minutes later, Perry started off, carrying a basket of food, like Little Red Riding Hood, although he didn't fear meeting a wolf, and before long he had climbed up the steep hillside to old Martha's cabin. The old woman greeted him most cordially, for she had seen nobody for days, and bade him chop her some wood and then sit by the fire and dry his clothes. While he sat watching the sparks fly up the big chimney, he suddenly recollected his errand and said:

"Martha, how does the Rain Witch make all this weather?"

"Well, I dunno prezactly. I certainly knows how she done make de wind blow, but howsomever she done conjure up wet weather am beyond me! Berv simple about de wind! She jes smoke her ole black pipe, an' den de east wind blow, and when she whistles den we git de west wind. Bimby she fan herself wif her apron an' den de souf wind kinder gently vamooses itself through de woods, an' when she takes de bellus an' blows up her fire, den we heards de norf wind a-screaching among de pines. Dat's all I knows about it!"

"My, I'd like to peep in at her and see her do it!"

exclaimed the boy, with his eyes gleaming. "Wouldn't it be great?"

"Don't you neber go ter try anything like dat!" cried old Martha, with a shudder. "Dat ole witch might change you into a owl or a black cat."

"Dey's heaps o' strange animiles a-hanging round her hut, and nobody knows whay dey come from. I speets, like as not, dey's people dat's bin a-snooping round and got ketched at it."

"I'll take dad's old gun," said Perry. "Don't you tink of it," she cried. "Why, you might better go and ask ole Giant Maginnis to wrastle wid you dan tackle de Rain Witch."

"Who is he? I never heard of him."

"Ain't you neber heard of Giant Maginnis? Den I reckon you ain't neber trabeled up de brook bery far, 'case if you did you'd sholy meet him. He lives just whar de water comes springin' out of de groun' 'bout forty miles from heah. Got a farm up yondah, but he ain't doing much farmin', I reckon, 'case dat ole witch am a-sendin' dis yere pesky weather on him, too!"

"How big is he?" demanded Perry, paling, but still brave.

"Bout 'leveny-one feet tall, I calkerlate. Anyhow, he's as tall as any giant dat ever was, and his kin just look right over most of de trees 'bout heah."

"Does—does he eat little boys?" asked Perry, in a faint voice.

"Mah goodness, heah dat chile! Certainly he don't eat no little boys, nor gals, nuther! He's a right smart gemman, is dat Giant Maginnis, but he sholy hates dat ole Rain Witch!"

"Well, then, I'll go and take a look at Maginnis," said Perry.

The next day he awoke filled with thoughts of the giant, and before the sun was over the mountain he had stolen away and was following the course of the brawling brook, up and over, toward where the great pines brushed the rain from the clouds.

By noon he was far from home and past all traces of farm or habitation, and yet in the most desolate spot he came upon a little log hut beside the brook. It was set in the centre of a deep hollow so that it was hardly visible a few yards away. A thin spiral of smoke curled upward from the stone chimney, and he knew that somebody was within. That it was the cabin of the Rain Witch Perry had no doubt, and he went past over the rocks on tiptoe as silent as the weasel.

But he had been heard by the witch, and she called out: "I hear you, old gray wolf! Food for you above at the giant's sheepfold! Hasten, wolf, and ravage!"

Perry grinned at being mistaken for a wolf, and dashed away through the bushes before she could come out and see him. Soon he came to a tremendous wall, the stones of which were larger than his mother's house, a wall that completely barred the way up the mountain to all but the brook which poured through between the gigantic stones in a flood.

But Perry's quick eye detected breaks in the wall that showed carelessness, and he was sure that somewhere he would find it fallen down so that he could climb over. After following it for some distance he came to a great break, which the giant, who was a very careless farmer, never had bothered to mend, and he crept over and between the great stones until he had passed the barrier. He was sure that now he was on the giant's farm, and soon he heard tremendous noises beyond the woods that told him Maginnis was plowing, for he was shouting to his horses.

Eager to see that sight, Perry hurried on, and after a long walk came to the field where the giant, with his giant horses and plow, was turning up hills of wet soil and shaking the very earth with their tread. He wore a very old-fashioned coat, with long flapping tails, and knickerbockers that made Perry smile when he saw them, for he did not know

that a hundred years ago all men wore knee breeches. He could see that Maginnis was terribly angry, but when he noticed how rain-soaked he was he felt that he had a right to be vexed. He climbed upon an earth hill and called out:

"Good morning, Mr. Maginnis!"

The giant looked all about before he saw Perry, and then said:

"Hello, son. What are you doing here?"

"I came to have a look at you, but on the way I got an idea how you can bring the old Rain Witch to terms," answered the boy.

"Indeed! Tell me how to do it, quick!" roared Maginnis, bending down.

"I observed that her house stands in a hollow where, once upon a time, the river must have run. Now, with your big shovel you could dam the brook and dig a new channel, so that you can turn the water into that old bed and simply flood her out, for, as perhaps you know, a witch can't cross water."

"Jiminy, but you are a wise one!" cried the giant. "And so small, too!"

"Oh, I've been well taught," replied Perry, simply. "I know a few things."

"Well, I've lived four hundred years and I never heard that about witches!" exclaimed Maginnis. "I'll go and get my shovel at once!"

When he came back he stood up and took a good look at the course of the river, and soon saw where to turn it aside into its ancient bed. It took but a few strokes of the shovel to dam the water and set it flowing down among the trees and rocks with a mighty roar.

The old witch heard it, but thought it was the swollen brook, never looking out until her cabin was surrounded by water three feet deep, and then she ran to her door in amazement and terror, for she knew that she never could cross the roaring stream. Her old black cat arched his back and spit savagely at the water that swirled over the very doorstep, then he leaped into a chair, for it began to creep in over the floor.

The witch mounted a table and then climbed into the loft, from whence she crawled out upon the roof and sat there in the rain, squalling dismally for help.

But she had selected a place of residence too far away from other people to obtain any help, for nobody was within reach of her voice except Perry and Maginnis, who were chuckling for joy up on the mountain top. After she had almost lost her voice, Perry conceived another idea and, telling the delighted giant to wait for him while he went to speak to the witch, he hastened down to her. He stopped at the water's edge and called out to her:

"You seem to be in trouble up there."

"Anybody but a fool could see that," she retorted. "I'm likely to be drowned, I suppose, in a few minutes unless I get help."

"I shall find a good use for it, depend upon that," replied the boy. "It will never be used to injure anybody after this. I'll just give you a spell of dry, warm weather that will make your crops jump, just to get my hand in, and then, when I have learned how to manage the thing, I'll go about the country selling any sort of weather people want."

"What a splendid idea!" cried Maginnis. "I'd like to go, too! Why not leave the farm to itself? I'll carry you around, and you know I can travel faster than any railroad train! If people don't want to pay you I'll collect the money!"

"That would save railroad fares," responded Perry.

"And you wouldn't have to put your money in a bank, either," added the giant. "I guess nobody will tackle you when I am with you."

"Well, we will form a partnership and travel together," said Perry.

"Hurrah! Grant and Maginnis, weather purveyors!" shouted the giant.

So, after he had fed his horses, Maginnis was ready to start on a journey all over the world, if need be, and taking a knapsack of food that would have supplied an army, he lifted Perry to his shoulder, saying:

"Now, which way shall we go first?"

"Looks that way to me," replied Perry.

"Don't stand there gawking at me!" she shrieked. "Get some logs and build a bridge to rescue me!"

"All the logs have flowed away," replied Perry. "There's but one way to save you."

"Well, get at it quickly," she yelled.

"What will you give me?" asked Perry.

"Anything you like," she replied. "Anything in my power shall be yours if you save me."

Perry stopped to consider what reward he should demand, and how he might want it, but the old witch, feeling her hut tremble beneath the rush of the flood, shrieked and waved her hands:

"Hurry! Hurry!" she cried. "I will be washed away in a minute while you are wasting time!"

"I can't save you without help," replied Perry, "and you must promise me that you will never again injure the one who comes with me."

"Who is he?" asked the witch, cautiously.

"The giant Maginnis. He is the only one who can save you now, but you have been annoying him by sending rain and wind against him so long that I fear even I will have difficulty in persuading him to come to your rescue."

"I'll trouble him no more!" cried the Rain Witch. "If I get out of this alive I'll never meddle with the weather again. In fact, if you'll induce him to save me, I will give you my Wind Bag!"

"What's that?" asked Perry.

"It's the source of all my power. With it I cause any wind to blow or make any sort of weather I choose."

"Toss it over to me," replied Perry. "Then I'll bring help."

"Can you not trust me?" demanded the Rain Witch.

"Not much," said the boy, "I want the Rain Bag first."

With many a grimace of fear she took from her belt a small leather bag and threw it across the raging brook. Perry seized it, and then ran for Maginnis, who was not far away, you may be sure.

The giant was unwilling at first to save the witch, but Perry proved to him that she was no longer dangerous, as, without her magic Wind Bag, she couldn't do any damage. So the giant sprang up and hastened to the brookside, where, between his finger and thumb, he lifted the frail hut of the witch from the waters and placed it far up on the hillside. The old witch, who never suspected how the flood had been caused, was very grateful and showed Perry how to use the Wind Bag and release any sort of weather he wished. As the boy walked away the giant, who was all smiles now, asked:

"What are you going to do with the bag?"

"I shall find a good use for it, depend upon that," replied the boy. "It will never be used to injure anybody after this. I'll just give you a spell of dry, warm weather that will make your crops jump, just to get my hand in, and then, when I have learned how to manage the thing, I'll go about the country selling any sort of weather people want."

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Perry pointed toward the distant mountains in the west, and said:

"I know there are many people over there, cities and farms innumerable. Let us go where we can be useful."

"Certainly. We must go where the money is," added the giant, as he strode away with long steps, and before he knew it Perry found himself over the farthest mountains and looking down on a land all cultivated, with cities, roads and farms in every direction. He had never been beyond the narrow valley, and the sight was very astonishing, for he had not known what a number of people live in this world.

"It's been terribly dry here, one can readily see that," said Maginnis. "I guess it will be little trouble to get employment as weather distributors in this place."

He set Perry down at the gate of a prosperous-looking farm, and the boy went into the house to see the owner, but it was some time before he could persuade the man that he had weather to sell. The farmer thought it was a new city trick to get his money, but at last he said:

"Well, sir, if you'll just show me a sample of your goods I'll talk business with you. Sprinkle my rye field, for instance."

Perry opened a corner of the Rain Bag, as the witch had taught him, and repeated the magic words that brought showers. The farmer's eyes popped out as a brisk shower swept down upon the rye field, and he looked frightened as Maginnis furnished the thunder by laughing loudly.

But he soon recovered from his astonishment, and said:

"Jerusalem! I am satisfied! What will you charge to give me three days' rain all over my land?"

Perry told him the price, and then the farmer added: "Say, I'll make a bargain with you! I'll give you three times as much if you'll agree not to allow any rain to fall anywhere else in this section. That will keep prices up, and I'll make a barrel of money, for nobody else will have any crops at all if this dry spell lasts a few days longer."

"That would give you a monopoly," replied Perry. "This is not a Weather Trust, my dear man. We are going to treat all alike, and cannot encourage any such selfishness. I have a good mind to go on and not sell you any rain at all."

"But it's what everybody is doing," asserted the farmer. "That's business."

"That's just what I am going to stop!" cried Perry. "Whenever we find that a part of the country is barren and unprofitable and richer portions are controlling the price of farm produce, we will make that land a garden."

"Yes," added Maginnis, "and we will dry up every trust we find!"

Perry arranged for a three days' rain, and passed on down the road to another farmer, who wanted moisture very much, and the rest of the day was spent in bestowing the needed rains in that region, for which Perry was paid an immense sum of money. When night came they returned home very well pleased with their day's work, and the giant dropped Perry at his mother's house with a laugh that frightened Mrs. Grant very much.

Next day they visited a very wet country, and Perry had to dry everything up with warm winds and a hot sun, for there they grew corn, sweet potatoes and similar vegetables. Next they journeyed to a great town and made an enormous sum of money by bringing a perfect flood of rain to clean the streets, fill the water works reservoirs and destroy a pest of flies. Here Perry was offered millions for the Wind Bag by a syndicate of rich men, who saw a chance to control the weather of the whole world; but the boy refused the offer indignantly, for he knew that these men would grind every penny out of the poor farmers by keeping them in need of rain or sunshine.

They went to the Desert of Sahara, and in two months made it bloom like a fairy garden, so that lots sold for a hundred dollars each, and once-poor camel drivers became rich, for, after all, it is water that does everything.

Then they returned home, and now Perry is busy arranging a scheme of weather that will suit everybody. When he has finished it will never rain on Saturday or picnic days; washdays will always be clear and dry; showers will come at stated times as regular as the tide, and always at the time most convenient for everybody in each locality. Cranberry bogs will be always wet, while next door muskmelons will lie in a hot sun in dry soil until they ripen, and people will have to stop talking about the weather, for there won't be any weather to talk about.

WALT McDUGALL.



She Threw the Rain Bag Across the Water.